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to have had a claim on the governor's clemency. Some have appropriated the proceeds of their labour, while in confinement, to the support of their families; and several, on leaving the prison, have received forty or fifty dollars, the overplus of the profits of their labour, and with this capital turned out honest and industrious members of society.

To be Continued.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

BETHLEM hospital in Moorfields,* from which the word *bedlam* has been borrowed and applied to mad-houses in general, does not differ much in its internal economy from St. Luke's. Indeed a large part of the building has been lately pulled down, its precincts having been invaded by the growing streets, which seem to render the removal of such an asylum from the heart of a public city, to a more quiet situation, absolutely necessary.

It now contains about 140 patients, who are treated nearly in the same manner as those of St. Luke's; the present master of *this* hospital having lived for many years as keeper of Bethlem. But, in my opinion, the rooms are neither so clean and comfortable, nor so well defended from the cold—nor have the patients of Bethlem the convenience of such large retired airing grounds as are to be seen at St. Luke's: and, how much free exercise in an open air unpolluted with the vapours of a close city must contribute to the restoration of lunatics, will be obvious to every one, not to mention that they are here very accessible to the noise of carriages and waggons rolling in the adjacent streets; or the depressing gloom which their ravings, heard in the stillness of night, by the

casual passenger, must occasion—as I have often experienced when passing near the walls of this hospital. I believe these circumstances have already had weight with the governors; and it is probable that before long a more eligible situation will be found for a building of so much importance. It is however still a venerable structure; and claims our admiration as well for its age, as for its past usefulness.*

There is a small establishment for the insane at Guy's hospital, in the borough of Southwark, that appears to be very well managed. Incurables only are admitted, and the present number does not exceed 26, who are all females and superintended by a very intelligent female keeper. The building is formed something like the letter Y, with two short galleries (having opposite cells) and a central square apartment for the keeper, from which both galleries are overlooked. There is one day room in each wing or horn of the building, near the central apartment; and a strong grated iron door defends this room at each side from the galleries. This establishment has one or two peculiarities which may be worth noticing. All the boxes, in which the patients lie upon straw, placed in the cells, as I have described them to be at St. Luke's, are lined with lead; and instead of the moisture draining through small holes in the false bottom at the foot of the bed, it is carried by the declivity, which gradually sinks in an oblique direction from the head towards the foot, into a small hole in the corner nearest the outward wall, where it is received into a pipe or conduit that runs all the length of the gallery at the outside. The master of St. Luke's informed me this was his suggestion; and I believe it has tended much to the cleanliness of the patients;

* "Bethlem hospital was originally a priory, founded by Simon Fitzroy, sheriff of London, in the year 1247, the members of which wore a star in commemoration of the star that guided the wise men on the birth of Christ, whence it derives its name. It was granted by Henry the eighth to the city for the cure of lunatics." *Higmore Pictus Londæ.*

* "The design of this hospital was taken from the Chateau de Tuilleries at Paris; the centre and wings of stone, with Corinthian pilasters, but the body of brick. Louis XIV. was so much offended at this copy of his palace, that he ordered a plan of St. James' palace to be taken for offices of a very inferior nature."

Vid. Higmore Palatæ Londæ.

for amongst so many incurables there must be several inattentive to their excretions, whom no other contrivance could keep free from the most disgusting filthiness. The system of diet and management is nearly the same as at St. Lukes. When I visited the place I observed only three of the whole number in a state of coercion. The rest were knitting, or sowing, or mending their stockings, or reading, according to their several fancies; and one very significantly told me not to go too near a neighbour of hers, who was confined in the straight waistcoat and strapped to the wall, "for she sometimes kicked." This was indeed a very deplorable object. For 12 years she had been in that asylum, without a single lucid interval; about 40 years of age, pale and ghastly, with a countenance expressive of the most rooted enmity to all around her, and the most determined malevolence. She spoke to none; but her lips seemed constantly to mutter with the most horrid intentions. She ate voraciously, bolting every morsel that was presented to her—but was never known to sleep: For, at whatever hour of the night any one awoke, she was heard muttering in low dismal tones the secrets of her distempered imagination; secrets that she never revealed. But, such a maniac is one of ten thousand; for, the most incurable are sometimes permitted to enjoy a short period of reason's light, except the idiot, whose senses are dwindled away to a state of mere vegetable existence.

I suppose it will occur to most, who consider the subject with any degree of attention, that where a number of incurables associate together, and are subject to occasional paroxysms of fury, their attendants as well as companions would be liable to much danger from the sudden attacks of their distemper. This would be the case, if there were no warning signs of its approach. But such are generally observed for some little time before; and when the attack does take place amongst the other patients, these seem to be providentially restrained by a unanimous

emotion of silent and fixed contemplation from interfering on one point or the other. If they opposed the chaining or securing of a raging maniac, the consequences might be dreadful. I believe it frequently happens, that when a lunatic is seized with a fit of epilepsy—his companions fall upon him, and in a most unmerciful manner beat him, whilst in the fit. The spectacle is shocking to them, and rouses their indignation, for they seem at a loss to account for the involuntary struggles, that indicate so little self-command, in the victims of this deplorable malady. For the above reason, epileptics are not admitted into the well regulated lunatic hospitals either of England or France.

As to the means of coercion adopted in this asylum, I did not find that they differed much from the usual methods. I observed, however, a very good contrivance, to prevent those, who are impelled by a blind impulse to injure themselves, from doing much mischief. Sometimes even the straight waistcoat and chains will not prevent the unhappy lunatic from beating the head violently against the bedstead or wall. To counteract the evils of this propensity, it is found necessary to have a large soft bolster suspended from the wall, when the patient sits, or securely fixed in its place at the head of the bed, so as that the head shall be drawn closely towards it, by tying the straps that secure the arms very short and tight. By this means the head is left at liberty to roll from side to side upon the pillow; and at the same time, it is not pressed so inconveniently towards the breast, as to render the breathing in any way difficult.

After these few general remarks upon the treatment of Lunatics, during the prevalence of their complaint, it may perhaps be interesting to know something of the moral treatment, adopted in the public hospitals, at the time of their recovery, or during their convalescence. Notwithstanding all that I have heard and read of the causes of insanity depending upon organic injuries of the brain, and therefore requiring a treat-
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ment strictly medical, I still consider that moral causes much more frequently produce the complaint, and that by moral remedies in consequence it will be most effectually removed. The former opinion implies a doctrine well calculated for those, who, themselves unacquainted with the gentler feelings of humanity, would prohibit that attention to the moral œconomy of lunatics, and that liberal spirit of inquiry into the mazes of disordered intellect, by which fury is repelled with mildness, instead of ignorant resentment; and confidence won by a firm but conciliating demeanour, with an open, undeceiving uniformity of character. I have so often heard of lunatics, who, under certain keepers were outrageous and wild, because they suffered chains and indignity, whilst under others they were inoffensive and sensible of kindness, because humanely treated; that I cannot believe any diseased structure of the brain should have been so obedient to the external manifestations of mind in different keepers, as must be necessarily inferred from such an opinion. I am however as far from denying the occasional disturbance of the brain and intellect from material agents—as, in cases of phrenzy from a coup de Soleil, of intoxication from spirituous liquors, and of delirium in various fevers, as I am from the unqualified admission that the cure is wholly to be looked for from medicine, or even from moral treatment in all cases of insanity. We know so little of the mysterious and much talked of connection between matter and mind at the sensorium, that we have no data for positive proof of either one opinion or the other. And, therefore, those equally wander from the legitimate rules of philosophic induction, who assert that the mind wholly influences the body, because the emotion of anger may have caused death, or the sight of an epileptic, by sympathy, convulsions; with the less soaring observers of nature's operations, who maintain the superiority of the latter, because they can feel the most exquisite pleasures of sense, and sweetest enchantments of fancy from a dose of opium, or have seen the trepan re-

move a contused portion of the skull; and the stupified faculties instantly start, as from a dream, into pristine vigour.

But I must apologise for this digression, as, it is not within my plan to indulge in theory, whilst I may exclude remarks of practical importance; which, I acknowledge, it is my wish *only* to introduce in these communications.

The subject, upon which I had just begun to treat, is of the greater consequence, because errors of the superintendants, at the time their patients begin to manifest signs of returning reason, may throw the unhappy lunatic back into all the horrors of insanity, of gloomy apprehension, distrust, or furious rage; as a mist may obscure the sun, when his beams after a long absence, have begun to cheer the face of nature.

I do not altogether think it a wise regulation that from their first admission into these hospitals the patients may be visited by their friends. At Bedlam one day in the week is set apart for this purpose. I am not so certain of the regulation at St. Luke's. At the same time I am ready to allow that in such large establishments it must be extremely difficult to discriminate accurately between those cases which may be benefited—and those which may be injured by the visits of relations. It is generally admitted that, at the commencement of the disease, relations should not be seen. For, our best authors agree that "maniacs are less disposed to acquire a dislike to those who are strangers, than to those with whom they have been intimately acquainted."* Therefore, the presence of these frequently rouses their fury, and for a time should be strictly prohibited. When the mania has a little subsided, it is very conducive to their perfect recovery to be admitted to the society of their friends. For, whenever the natural affections begin to return, the calmness of reason adds also her blessings, and good hopes may then be entertained.

It is generally observed that those who are most impatient under confinement,

Vid. Haslam on madness.

most confident of their re-established reason, and most importunate to be liberated, are the least of all to be trusted. Celsus made the remark formerly, and it may now be considered an aphorism in mental disorder.* On the contrary a good deal of reliance may always be placed in those, who acknowledge their infirmity, and reason calmly upon the degree of self-command, which they find it necessary to assume, in order to resist the impetuosity of their disease. I remember to have heard from Dr. Fox, when I had the pleasure of seeing his excellent private establishment near Bristol, about two years since, that he was now and then visited by a country gentleman, possessed of considerable property, unfortunately subject to periodical insanity, who discovered the approach of his disorder by certain signs, and always resigned himself voluntarily to the Doctor's humane care, until he found himself so far recovered that he could with propriety trust to his self-government. He was generally restored in a few months; and then took his leave, to resume his occupations, or amusements in the country.

When a lunatic appears sufficiently recovered, he is given to understand, that in consequence of his good behaviour he may be allowed to spend the day, with some of his friends, out of the hospital; but, that he must punctually return at a certain hour; and, if the master should hear any complaints of him, whilst absent, that he must again suffer the punishment and indignity of being confined with the most outrageous, or to his own cell. This threat has a very powerful effect, and is attended with the best consequences.

But, notwithstanding the wisdom and humanity of these regulations, there is still much wanting in the public lunatic asylums, to make them as perfect, as such establishments might be constituted, without a much more

complicated plan. It is not the least defect in St. Luke's and Bethlem that they have no regular mode of separating the convalescents from the furious, except by confining the latter, injuriously, to their cells, whilst their more peaceable neighbours are suffered to parade the galleries close by the very doors, liable to all their abuse and preposterous language. Pinel, the enlightened physician of the hospital de Bicetre in Paris, is very precise in his observations upon this subject, and relates the case of a musician, who "at the commencement of his convalescence, once expressed himself as if he had a confused recollection of his favourite amusement. His violin was brought, and his recovery was advancing by it. But, *about that time*, was admitted into the asylum, another maniac, who was exceedingly furious and extravagant. Frequent rencontres with this new comer, who was permitted to ramble about the garden without restraint, *again unhinged* the musician's mind, and overwhelmed its returning powers. The violin was forthwith destroyed; his favourite amusement was forsaken; and his insanity is now considered as confirmed and incurable—"an instance adds Pinel," equally distressing and remarkable of the contagious influence of acts of maniacal extravagance upon the state of convalescents; and a strong proof of the necessity of *insulation*. *Vid. Pinel Sect. 88.*

THOS. HANCOCK.

London, May 2, 1810.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

ON the arrival here of your Magazine for February last, I was astonished to see in it a most scurrilous and unmerited attack upon the character of one of my fellow students. It is contained in a paper entitled "a Letter to a student at College," written by some person who signs himself S.E. from Bullinahinch.

As this attack has been publicly made through your Magazine I trust that you will give me liberty through the same medium, publicly to repel it. In this, you will do justice not only to the person against whom it was intended, but to the whole body

* Neque credendum est, si vinculus aliquis, dum ligari vinculis cupit, sanum jam se fingat; quamvis prudenter et miserabiliter loquatur, quoniam is dolus insanientis est."

Corn. Celsus, de medicina lib. : iii. cap. xviii.